



**Seattle**  
Office of Immigrant and  
Refugee Affairs

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**NEW CITIZEN PROGRAM  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
2022-2023**

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**NEW CITIZEN PROGRAM  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**GUIDELINES**

**I. Introduction**

The Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) is seeking applications from agencies interested in providing naturalization assistance and related services to low-income immigrants and refugees as a partner with OIRA's New Citizen Program (NCP).

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is open to community-based agencies that assist immigrants and refugees living in the City of Seattle and King County.

Approximately \$940,000 is available through this RFP from the following sources:

<b>Fund Sources</b>	<b>RFP Amount</b>
<b>OIRA General Fund</b>	\$225,000
<b>Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)</b>	\$670,000
<b>Seattle Housing Authority</b>	\$45,000
<b>Total</b>	\$940,000*

\*This funding estimate is based on the 2021-22 DSHS award and the expected contribution from the City's General Fund. These funding amounts have not yet been finalized for 2022-23, and any significant reductions may affect the funding available for this RFP.

Initial awards will be made for the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. While OIRA expects to renew contracts resulting from this RFP on an annual basis, future funding will be contingent upon performance and funding availability.

All materials and any updates to the RFP can be found at:  
<https://welcoming.seattle.gov/2022-ncc-rfp>.

If you have any questions about this RFP, please contact:

**SEATTLE OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE AFFAIRS  
NEW CITIZEN PROGRAM REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**APRIL 2022**

Email: [OIRARFP@seattle.gov](mailto:OIRARFP@seattle.gov)  
Phone: (206) 573-8187

## **II. Timeline**

Monday, April 4, 2022	Request for Proposal (RFP) issued
Thursday, April 7, 2022 at 2:00PM	Info session on Zoom (will be recorded and posted)
Tuesday, April 19, 2022 by 5:00PM	Last day to submit questions
Friday, April 22, 2022	Answers will be posted online
Friday, April 29, 2022 at 5:00PM	Application deadline
Monday, May 2-Friday, May 13, 2022	Review of RFP submissions
Monday, May 16-Friday, May 20, 2022	Site visits and follow up, if needed
Monday, May 23, 2022	OIRA Director approval
Tuesday, May 24, 2022	Award notification
Tuesday, May 24-Thursday, June 30, 2022	Contract negotiation and signature
Friday, July 1, 2022	Contract start date

Dates subject to change. Any updates to the timeline will be posted at <https://welcoming.seattle.gov/2022-ncc-rfp>.

## **III. OIRA Guiding Principles**

The mission of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) is to improve the lives of Seattle's immigrant and refugee residents. OIRA strives to achieve this vision by engaging immigrant and refugee communities in decisions about the City's future and improving the City's programs and services.

The New Citizen Campaign seeks to increase the numbers of immigrants and refugees who naturalize and engage in civic processes, by providing naturalization assistance, performing broad-based outreach, and promoting awareness on the benefits of citizenship and engagement with local and national partners. The New Citizen Program (NCP) is part of this larger campaign, with a particular focus on low-income residents who face significant barriers to naturalization.

## **IV. Program Background**

The New Citizen Program (NCP) prioritizes services to low-income immigrants and refugees who face the greatest barriers to obtaining U.S. citizenship because of age, disability, limited English proficiency and low literacy. Applying for citizenship is a complex process, systems are hard to navigate, and application fees are expensive. Citizenship tests may be challenging for those who have limited English proficiency, and individuals who need legal services may not be able to afford them. NCP provides a valuable service to applicants who might not otherwise be successful in their attempts to naturalize.

NCP follows a consortium model that encourages collaboration and partnership. Agencies in the consortium work together to meet programmatic goals and fulfill NCP's overarching mission. Agencies

share successful strategies and best practices and often participate in efforts to improve systems and institutions.

Funding for NCP is provided by City of Seattle, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, and Seattle Housing Authority.

## V. Program Requirements

**Program Eligibility:** NCP participants are non-citizen immigrants and refugees who are eligible to naturalize. All participants must be low-income City of Seattle residents, residents of a Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) unit, and/or currently receiving a means-tested benefit from the State of Washington, including, but not limited to, Apple Health (Medicaid), SSI, food assistance (FAP or Basic Food) and temporary cash assistance.

Low-income City of Seattle residents and SHA residents are eligible if even they do not receive a means-tested benefit. The income requirement for individuals qualifying as City of Seattle residents is based on income limits set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), currently \$57,850 or less for a four-person household.<sup>1</sup>

NCP agencies must screen participants and assess eligibility before providing services. NCP agencies must prioritize services for eligible individuals residing in Seattle or King County for whom gaining U.S. citizenship would enhance their livelihood, family security, or other vital opportunities.

**Service Delivery:** All NCP agencies are required to provide the following services:

- Screening for enrollment and citizenship eligibility
- Assessment of English language skills
- Assistance with the completion and submission of the Form N-400, Application for Naturalization and Form I-912, Application for Fee Waiver
- Assistance with the completion and submission of Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exception
- Interview preparation
- Attendance at USCIS interviews (interview assistance)

**Agencies must submit a G-28 with every application submitted to USCIS on behalf of a client funded by this contract.** Many participants do not require all the services listed above, but agencies must provide them as needed. Agencies are not required to attend (either virtually or in-person) every naturalization interview but are strongly encouraged to do so in cases where attendance will meaningfully increase the client's chances of being approved.

Agencies are encouraged to provide, or make appropriate referrals for, the following services:

- Citizenship instruction
- Appeals of denied N-400s and N-648s
- Assistance with the completion and submission of Form N-600, Application for Certificate of Naturalization

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2021/2021summary.odn>

**Staffing Requirements:** Agencies must employ enough qualified staff members to effectively perform the contracted service activities, including at least one partially or fully accredited Department of Justice (DOJ) representative. Program staff, volunteers, and supervisors must have experience in providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services to immigrant and refugee communities.

Supervisors are required to provide the resources, training, and ongoing support needed for program staff to successfully deliver citizenship services and to meet contract requirements for case management, reporting, and invoicing.

**Deliverables:** On a monthly basis, agencies should report the following data for any activities that fall within their scope of services:

- Number of participants enrolled, following a comprehensive screening
- Number of participants who receive a means-tested State benefit
- Number of participants who reside in Seattle
- Number of participants who reside in Seattle Housing Authority units
- Number of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization submitted
- Number of Form I-912, Application for Fee Waiver submitted
- Number of Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions submitted
- Number of Form N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (appeals) submitted
- Number of naturalization completions (approved N-400s)
- Hours of citizenship instruction, including lesson planning, provided to participants (i.e., one instructor preparing for one hour and teaching two one-hour classes equals three hours)
- Hours of citizenship instruction received by participants (i.e., one instructor teaching two one-hour classes each attended by three students equals six hours)
- Number of participants receiving interview preparation
- Number of participants receiving interview assistance

## **VI. Agency Eligibility**

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs will accept and consider RFP submissions that meet the following minimal eligibility requirements:

- The applicant must be incorporated as a private non-profit corporation in the State of Washington and must have been granted 501(c)(3) tax exempt status by the United States Internal Revenue Service. The applicant's 501(c)(3) status must be in good standing and must not have been revoked in the previous calendar year.
- The applicant must meet all licensing requirements that apply to its agency. Agencies must maintain a current Washington State Business License (UBI#) and, if applicable, a Seattle Business License.
- The applicant must have a Federal Tax ID number/employer identification number (EIN) to facilitate invoice payments from the City of Seattle.

- The applicant must be a nonprofit agency formally recognized by the Department of Justice (DOJ)'s Office of Legal Assistance Programs (OLAP). The applicant must be authorized by the DOJ to represent individuals in matters before the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In order to acquire and maintain DOJ recognition, the applicant agency must employ one or more DOJ-accredited representatives who have been explicitly approved by the DOJ to work for the applicant agency.
- The applicant must employ a DOJ-accredited representative; employing an attorney in lieu of DOJ-accredited staff does not meet this requirement. Agencies with a pending application for DOJ recognition may apply if they are able to show proof of the pending application, and that the DOJ is likely to approve the application by June 1, 2022. If at any time during the RFP process, the applicant organization is no longer able to meet this requirement, they must inform OIRA within three business days to seek a resolution, or be disqualified.

## **VII. Client Data and Program Reporting Requirements**

Agencies must collect and report client-level demographic data as outlined in any resulting contract. Agencies must implement procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of all client records, both hard copy files and all data and documentation stored electronically.

The agency must enter client and service activity data into the eJAS database hosted by State of Washington, Department of Social and Health Services. Agency staff must learn to use the eJAS database and be entering all eligible service activities within 60 days of the contract start date. Contractor staff members must provide timely responses to requests for additional information sent by DSHS.

## **VIII. Contracting Requirements**

Any contract resulting from this RFP will be between the City of Seattle, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA), and the applicant agency (referred to as "Contractor" in this section). The following guidelines apply to contracts and contractors resulting from this RFP:

- Contracts may be amended during the contract period to ensure that services and outcomes align with the community needs or due to availability of funding.
- OIRA will attach exhibits and attachments to all resulting contracts. These exhibits and attachments will include program terms, procedures, requirements and templates for reporting and invoicing.
- Contractors will be required to maintain books, records, documents, and other evidence directly related to performance of the work in accordance with Generally Acceptable Accounting Procedures. The City of Seattle, or any of its duly authorized representatives, shall have access to such books, records and documents for inspection, audit, and copying for a period of six years after completion of work.
- Contractors must submit a report and invoice each month, as outlined in the resulting contract. Invoice payment is contingent upon receipt and approval of required reports and a

complete and accurate invoice. OIRA may occasionally require additional data for audit or evaluation purposes. Contractors must have the capacity to protect and maintain all confidential information related to any resulting contract against unauthorized use, access, disclosure, modification or loss.

- The City has strict policies regarding the use of background checks, criminal checks and immigrant status for contract workers. The policies are incorporated into the contract and available for viewing online at <http://www.seattle.gov/purchasing-and-contracting/social-equity/background-checks>.
- Contractors must perform a national criminal background check dating back ten years for staff members working with NCP clients. Contractors must perform a Washington State Patrol background check on each employee annually thereafter. Volunteers must have a seven-year national criminal background check and the Washington State Patrol background check annually thereafter.
- Contractors must provide contracted services in an environment that is safe and affirming of all genders, races, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, sexual orientations, cultures, abilities, backgrounds, and family structures. Contractors should, whenever possible, provide services in the participant's preferred language. OIRA will assist contractors in efforts to increase language access.
- OIRA forbids contractors from including religious content in the services provided under this contract. Contractors may not require individuals to participate in religious activities, such as prayer or religious services, as a condition of receiving services funded by this contract.
- The contractor must publicly recognize OIRA's contribution to any program funded by this contract. Such acknowledgment must be included on any website or printed materials that refer to the New Citizen Program or other citizenship services.
- Contractors must maintain a commercial general liability insurance policy with a minimum limit of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 in aggregate, naming the City of Seattle as insured.
- Contractors must comply with the City's Paid Sick Time and Safe Time ordinance and provide paid leave to care for themselves or a family member, attend a medical appointment or deal with a critical safety issue. Please refer to <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/LaborStandards/PSSTQACOV030620.pdf>

## **IX. Selection Process**

This RFP is competitive. To be considered for funding, applicants must submit a completed application packet by the deadline. All completed applications turned in before the deadline that meet the minimum eligibility qualifications will be reviewed and individually scored by members of a review committee. The review committee will forward their recommendations to the OIRA Director for final decision regarding contracts and award amounts. OIRA will notify the agency management staff



indicated on the Application Cover Sheet regarding any proposed contract and award.

Applications must be complete to be considered for review and scoring. Additionally, OIRA will not consider applications received late and/or that do not meet minimum eligibility requirements. OIRA reserves the right to identify, seek clarification, and waive any nonmaterial irregularities or informalities in determining whether or not an application is complete.

The review committee will score applications based on the criteria outlined in the Guidelines and Application materials. These criteria relate directly to the applicant's ability to provide NCP services. If necessary, an OIRA staff member or member of the review committee may reach out by phone or email to the contact person listed on the Application Cover Sheet to clarify application contents. The review committee reserves the right to conduct interviews and/or site visits with applicants prior to making funding recommendations to the OIRA Director.

Due to the competitive nature of this RFP, OIRA will not provide individual technical assistance to applicants. OIRA will host and record at least one information session which applicants are encouraged, but not required, to attend. The information session is intended to answer questions and provide clarifications as needed. OIRA staff will respond to general questions asked during info sessions, as well as inquiries made in writing, outside of information sessions, made prior to April 19, 2022. OIRA will not provide guidance regarding the specific content or presentation of any application. OIRA will post answers to any general questions posed by applicants at <https://welcoming.seattle.gov/2022-ncc-rfp>.

If OIRA makes any changes or additions to this RFP, it will post those edits as a formal written addendum that shall become part of this RFP. Addendums, if applicable, will be posted at <https://welcoming.seattle.gov/2022-ncc-rfp>.

OIRA may elect to fund an applicant's submission without further discussion or negotiation. If the application is selected for funding, applicants will be expected to review and respond to the proposed contract terms within the timeline provided. The final funding amount for each contract is subject to OIRA's 2022-23 award from Department of Social and Health Services, Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (DSHS-ORIA), which may not be finalized until late June 2022.

OIRA also reserves all rights not expressly stated in this RFP, including making no award, awarding partial funding, and negotiating with any applicant regarding the funding amount and other terms of any contract resulting from this RFP.

## **X. Appeal Process**

An applicant is any legal entity that has responded to a formal funding process conducted by OIRA in soliciting applications for the provision of defined services. Applicants have the right to protest or appeal certain decisions made by OIRA.

Applicants may appeal a decision based on the following grounds:

- Regarding failure to submit a complete application or failure to meet the minimum eligibility requirements outlined in the funding opportunity;
- A matter of bias, discrimination, or conflict of interest; and/or

**SEATTLE OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE AFFAIRS**  
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- A violation of policies or failure to adhere to guidelines, published criteria and/or procedures established in the RFP.

The appeals process is as follows:

- OIRA will notify all applicants via email regarding the final status of their application. For applicants that are awarded funding, the notification will include proposed performance targets and funding levels. Proposed funding levels will not be finalized until OIRA has received its 2022-23 award from DSHS-ORIA.
- The applicant may submit a written appeal to the OIRA Director *within ten business days* from the date of the written notification by OIRA.
- The OIRA Director will review the written appeal and consider all available facts. The Director may request additional oral or written information from the appellant agency. A written decision by the OIRA Director will be made within ten business days of the receipt of the appeal. The OIRA Director's decision is final.
- If the Director determines the appeal to be lacking in merit or finds only immaterial or harmless errors in the review process, the appeal may be rejected and the City action upheld. If the determination finds the appeal has merit, the Director will initiate further action, which may include re-tabulating scores and conducting further review of eligible applicants.

Appeals must be emailed to OIRA Director [Hamdi.Mohamed@seattle.gov](mailto:Hamdi.Mohamed@seattle.gov). It should include the following information and any additional information that the applicant wishes to be considered in the appeal.

1. Agency name, mailing address, phone number and name of individual responsible for submission of the appeal;
2. Specify the funding opportunity title;
3. State the specific action or decision you are appealing;
4. Indicate the basis for the appeal, including specific facts;
5. Indicate what relief or corrective action your agency seeks; and
6. If applicable, demonstrate that your agency made every reasonable effort within the application process schedule to resolve the issue, including asking questions, attending information sessions, seeking clarification and otherwise alerting OIRA to any perceived concerns.

The appeal must be sent from the email address of the agency's Executive Director or a similar level agency management staff.

If the agency fails to provide the information listed above, the appeal may be rejected due to the OIRA Director lacking sufficient information to adequately consider the nature of the appeal. If OIRA finds an appeal to be without merit, OIRA will proceed to finalizing contracts with funded agencies. Even if the appeal is determined to have merit, OIRA may contract as necessary to meet time-sensitive client needs. Nothing in this RFP diminishes the authority of OIRA to enter a contract, even if an intention to appeal has been announced, or an appeal action is pending.



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**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

**I. Submission Instructions and Deadline**

Completed application packets **must be received by 5:00 PM on Friday, April 29, 2022.**

Application packets may be sent by mail or email (strongly preferred). No faxed proposals will be accepted. Proposals must be received by the 5:00 PM deadline. Late or incomplete proposals will not be accepted or reviewed for funding consideration.

The application packet should be emailed in PDF format to [OIRARFP@seattle.gov](mailto:OIRARFP@seattle.gov). If necessary, the application packet can also be mailed to:

Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs  
RFP Response – New Citizen Program  
P.O. Box 94573  
Seattle, WA 98124-6873

**II. Format Instructions**

- Applications will be rated only on the information and documentation requested and outlined for this RFP. Do not include a cover letter, agency promotional materials, or letters of support.
- Organize your application according to the section headings that follow (e.g., Section A, B, C). For the narrative sections, please include section titles and subheadings (e.g., Agency Information, Program Design) that are in bold print. You do not need to rewrite the questions for each subheading. **The narrative portion (sections A, B and C) must be 10 or fewer single-spaced pages, using 12-point font.**
- All submissions must include a signed cover sheet (Attachment 2). Emailed applications must be in PDF format, and signatures on a PDF are considered legally binding. Please submit the cover sheet by completing and signing the fillable PDF *or* by printing out, signing, and scanning the Word Document version.

### III. Proposed Narrative & Rating Criteria

Program narratives are key to the application and should demonstrate the applicant agency's expertise, relevant experience, and values. Please keep your narrative brief but thorough and try to cover all of the bullet points listed below. Do not exceed a total of 10 pages for sections A, B and C combined.

#### SECTION A: AGENCY INFO, PROGRAM DESIGN AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH - 50 points

##### AGENCY INFORMATION (10 points)

- Give a brief description of your agency and its overall mission.
- Describe your agency's experience with providing citizenship and/or other immigration legal services.

##### PROGRAM DESIGN (20 points)

- Describe your program model and outline the key service components in your program.
  - If your agency is not currently providing citizenship legal services, describe any related experience and how the program plans to build capacity in this area. If applicable, please include a timeline showing how and by when the program would be able to provide legal services required under the NCP contract.
- Indicate which services your program will provide and the methods you will use to deliver them. (Please refer to page 6 for the list of services funded under this contract.) For example, does your program plan to provide citizenship instruction? If so, what is the size/location/format of classes? When will services be delivered and by whom?
- Does your agency have existing partnerships or connections, formal or informal, which strengthen your work? Please describe existing and/or proposed partner activities and how you connect or refer clients to them.

##### COMMUNITIES SERVED AND OUTREACH EFFORTS (20 points)

- Describe the characteristics of the community or communities your program serves.
- How does your program spread awareness of the benefits of citizenship and maximize the number of participants accessing its services? How does your program reach out to new communities and/or participants who are not as likely to access your current programs? How does your program assist people who speak a language not spoken by any of your staff members?

The application will be scored based on how well the narrative meets these criteria:

- ❖ Provides a detailed description of the program that demonstrates an understanding of the service components.
- ❖ Demonstrates success in providing services to the community and operation for at least two years, or for applicants providing citizenship legal services for the first time, presents a clear and realistic plan and timeline for launching a new service.
- ❖ Shows partnerships that enhance service quality and provide benefit to program

participants.

- ❖ Describes a strong connection with the communities to be served and an understanding of their strengths, unique needs, and concerns.
- ❖ Demonstrates the ability to provide in-language, culturally relevant services and an awareness of common barriers that clients may experience.
- ❖ Describes how the program will engage and recruit communities currently served by the program or agency, as well as communities/individuals less commonly served.

## **SECTION B: STAFFING AND CAPACITY - 25 points**

### **STAFFING (10 points)**

- Briefly describe the qualifications of the staff members who provide the services described in your program design.
- Which staff members are currently DOJ-accredited and authorized to work for your agency? What year did your agency gain DOJ recognition? If your agency is not yet DOJ recognized, how soon do you expect this recognition to be granted? Do you have an immigration attorney on staff and/or consistent access to volunteer attorneys?
- Describe your plan for staff recruitment, training, supervision, and retention for the program.
- How does your Board of Directors and staff (including leadership) reflect the communities you serve? Please provide a link to the Board roster, if available.

### **AGENCY CAPACITY (15 points)**

- Describe your agency's experience with collecting and managing data. What are your practices around collecting and protecting client information, recording service activities, and producing reports and invoices?
- Describe your agency's financial management system. How do you establish and maintain general accounting principles, sound accounting systems, and internal controls? If your agency lacks such capabilities, you may wish to have an established agency act as fiscal agent. If applicable, please indicate how your program plans to partner with a fiscal agent. (Please note that the City of Seattle considers the fiscal agent to be the official contractor, and responsible for ensuring ALL contract terms are met. If you are applying with a fiscal agent, management staff of both organizations must sign your RFP application declaring this understanding and intent.)
- Describe your agency's financial ability to meet program expenses in advance of monthly reimbursement.

The application will be scored based on how well the narrative meets these criteria:

- ❖ Demonstrates staff member qualifications and experience in providing the services proposed.
- ❖ Describes the extent to which strategies for staff development and retention are in place.
- ❖ Describes the extent to which agency Board and staff reflect the cultural and linguistic characteristics of program participants and communities to be served.

- ❖ Demonstrates the program's understanding of capacity to collect accurate data, track service activities and produce required monthly reports and invoices.
- ❖ Demonstrates capacity to ensure adequate administrative and accounting procedures and controls necessary to safeguard all funds that may be awarded under this contract.
- ❖ Demonstrates the agency's financial capability to meet program expenses in advance of reimbursement.

## **SECTION C: BUDGET & DELIVERABLES - 25 points**

### **BUDGET (15 points)**

- Complete the Proposed Program Budget (Attachment 3). The costs reflected in this budget should be just for the services funded by a potential contract under this RFP, not your total agency budget.
- Complete the Proposed Personnel Detail Budget (Attachment 4).
- Describe how these funds will be used, and if applicable, identify other resources and funding sources that will be used to support the participants served by this program.
- Describe how your agency follows administrative and accounting procedures and will safeguard any funds that may be awarded.

### **DELIVERABLES (10 points)**

Estimate the outcomes your program will achieve with the total funding amount requested. You must provide numbers for the starred (\*) outcomes, but please provide estimates for all services your program plans to offer.

- Number of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization submitted\*
- Number of Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions submitted\*
- Number of naturalization completions (approved N-400s)\*
- Number of participants receiving interview preparation\*
- Number of participants receiving interview assistance\*
- Hours of citizenship instruction, including lesson planning, provided to participants (i.e., one instructor preparing for one hour and teaching a two-hour class equals three hours)
- Hours of citizenship instruction received by participants (i.e., one instructor teaching a two-hour class attended by three students equals six hours)
- Number of Form N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (appeals) submitted

The application will be scored based on how well the narrative meets these criteria:

- ❖ Budget forms are complete and appear accurate.
- ❖ Costs are reasonable and appropriate given the nature of the service, the proposed type and volume of services, and the proposed outcomes.
- ❖ The proposed program is cost-effective given the type, quantity, and quality of services.

The applicant agency has a defined plan for safeguarding funds and if necessary, has identified other funds to be used in conjunction with any funds awarded by this RFP.

**Sections A + B + C = 100 points**

#### **IV. List of Attachments**

- Attachment 1: Application Checklist
- Attachment 2: Application Cover Sheet
- Attachment 3: Proposed Program Budget
- Attachment 4: Proposed Personnel Detail Budget